

ELDERinfo is now the Delaware Medicare Assistance Bureau

Free Service Has Been Helping Delaware Medicare Recipients For More Than Twenty Years

Dover, DE—Insurance Commissioner Karen Weldin Stewart is pleased to announce that the ELDERinfo program will now be known as the **Delaware Medicare Assistance Bureau** or DMAB. ELDERinfo has been providing free, local assistance to Delaware's Medicare recipients for 21 years, and it will continue to offer the same great services just with a new name. Commissioner Stewart stated, ***"With this new name we hope to reach more of the nearly 28,000 Medicare recipients in the state who are under age 65 and on Medicare due to a disability. Many of the younger Medicare recipients think the service is only for people age 65 and older. Additionally, many of the people today who are 65 and older do not feel 'elderly' and they reject terms that make them feel old. The new name better reflects the services that the program provides to the public. We think the new name will be a win-win for the staff and the public."***

As of September 2013, Delaware was home to 167,538 Medicare recipients which includes almost 28,000 individuals who are under the age of 65 and on Medicare due to disability. The program assisted 5,864 individuals in 2013 and helped Medicare recipients save more than two million dollars in prescription drug costs and \$492,000 on Medicare Part B premiums. Approximately 18% of Delaware's population receives Medicare benefits and that number is only going to grow as the Baby-Boomer generation turns 65.

According to Lakia Turner, director of the Delaware Medicare

Assistance Bureau, the new name will hopefully reduce some confusion among the public because ELDERinfo often received calls from people who thought the program was a resource for all senior-related programs in the state. ***“DMAB is a free resource for Medicare recipients who have questions about Medigap plans, prescription drug coverage, Medicare Advantage, financial assistance programs and anything else related to Medicare,”*** said Ms. Turner. ***“Our phone number will remain the same: 1-800-336-9500. You can also send e-mails to DMAB@delaware.gov or find information on our updated website, www.delawareinsurance.gov/DMAB.”***

The Delaware Department of Insurance and the Delaware Medicare Assistance Bureau are taking this time to remind disabled Medicare beneficiaries under the age of 65 that with the passage of Senate Bill 42, SB 42, in 2013 there are new Medigap (Medicare supplement insurance) options available to them but time to purchase the plans is limited. SB 42 became effective on January 1, 2014, and requires insurance companies that offer Medigap policies to people 65 and older to also offer the same policies to anyone under the age of 65 who qualifies for Medicare due to a disability.

Commissioner Stewart noted, ***“Existing Medicare beneficiaries under the age of 65 who had Medicare prior to January 1, 2014, only have until June 30, 2014 to purchase a Medigap plan under this law. Newly enrolled Medicare recipients under age 65 have six months to purchase one of these plans, from the time benefits begin. It’s very important that these individuals not wait until the last minute to compare plans or sign up, if they are interested. That’s why I encourage anyone with Medicare due to a disability under age 65 to call DMAB at 1-800-336-9500 today to get more information before their time to act expires.”*** The DMAB website, www.delawareinsurance.gov/DMAB, also has information about Medigap plans, including the 2014 Delaware Medicare Supplement Insurance Shopper’s Guide, which was just released yesterday.

The Delaware Medicare Assistance Bureau also offers free info sessions for people who are turning 65 and want to learn about the basic concepts of their Medicare coverage. Other info sessions are offered during the annual open-enrollment period (October 15-December 7) to help recipients review their prescription drug coverage for the upcoming year. Sessions are held at various counseling sites throughout the state. See the website, www.delawareinsurance.gov/DMAB, for a list of sites or call 1-800-336-9500. Volunteers are a vital part of the DMAB program and any individuals who would like to volunteer with DMAB are encouraged to call for more information. There will be volunteer training sessions hosted in July 2014.

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through regulation
and education while providing oversight of the insurance
industry to best serve the public."*